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Sen. Laura Toy announces formation of committee to look at bringing back Livonia holiday parade

LANSING – Livonia native and state Senator Laura M. Toy has announced that she will form a committee to look at reviving Livonia's annual holiday parade.

"So many people have approached me about bringing a Christmas parade back to Livonia," said Sen. Toy, 6th District. "After discussing it with community and business leaders I've decided we're ready to move forward and see how much support there is in the community to make this a reality."

The annual parade was shuttered in 2004 following the closing of Wonderland Mall. Sen. Toy wants to bring interested individuals together to see if she can reorganize the event, possibly for 2007.

"Our city has confronted some challenging circumstances in recent years," said Livonia Mayor Jack Engebretson. "I would say that bringing community groups and leaders together is certainly a positive thing right now. Working together with Senator Toy to explore the possibility of bringing back Livonia's holiday parade, perhaps at a new venue, I think that is very welcome."

Among those Sen. Toy has approached to help in her efforts to revive the parade are Patrick Derrig of Laurel Park Place Mall, community activist Pattie Coughlan, and Livonia Chamber President Wes Graff.

"I'm all for it," said Livonia City Councilwoman Terry Godfroid-Marecki. "I've heard from a lot of residents who really miss the parade. We have so many great places to hold an event like that and so many talented people to help run it in our community. I'm glad Senator Toy has stepped forward to get the ball rolling."

Council members Don Knapp and Tom Robinson were also supportive.

"The parade was always a great time for families and for people of all ages," Knapp said. "If we can revive it (the parade) that would be great for our community."

Robinson pointed out the economic impact of having a parade.

"When we had the parade at Livonia Mall and then later at Wonderland Mall it was always a great boon for the retailers there," Robinson said. "I'm sure there are plenty of businesses in our city who would like to see the parade come to their neighborhood."

(more)

Those interested in participating should send an e-mail with their name, address, and phone number(s) to livoniaholidayparade@yahoo.com. Those without e-mail can send the same information to Sen. Toy's office at P.O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909 with a short note indicating that they would like to help with the parade.